

REMARKS

A. Status of Claims

The Office Action dated June 11, 2007 has been reviewed, and the comments of the U.S. Patent Office have been considered. Claims 57, 59, 66, 67, 68, 69, 73, 74, 76 and 77 have been amended. Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Claims 57-63 and 66-77 are pending.

B. Examiner Interview

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during the September 18, 2007 and September 20, 2007 telephone interviews in which the outstanding rejections were discussed. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is contained in the comments below.

As agreed during the September 20, 2007 telephone interview (hereinafter "Examiner Interview"), the above amendments to Claims 57, 59, 66, 68, 69, 73, 74, 76 and 77 put Claims 57-63 and 66-77 in condition for allowance. As also agreed during the September 20, 2007 telephone interview, the term "pit" as used in Claims 57, 59, 66, 68, 69, 73, 74, 76 and 77 would cover structures such as the openings 171, 172, 173 and 174 shown and described in U.S. Patent No. 5,903,588 to Guenter *et al.*

C. Response to Rejection of Claims 53-63, 66-67, 69-72 and 74-75 Under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Lear

At Section 3 of the Office Action, Claims 53-63, 66-67, 69-72 and 74-75¹ are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,568,499 to Lear (Lear).² However, as agreed during the Examiner Interview, this rejection has been rendered moot by the above amendments to the claims. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

D. Response to Rejection of Claims 68, 73, and 76-77 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Lear

At Section 4 of the Office Action, Claims 68, 73 and 76-77 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lear.³ However, as agreed during the Examiner Interview, this rejection has been rendered moot by the above amendments to the claims. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

¹ There appears to be a typographical error in the rejection of claims 64 and 65 at page 2 of the Office Action, because Claims 64 and 65 have been previously cancelled.

² See Office Action, pp. 2-4.

³ See Office Action, p. 4.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this Application and the prompt allowance of claims 57-63 and 66-77.

Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution of the application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized by this paper to charge any fees during the entire pendency of this application including fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required, including any required extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 10-0233. **This paragraph is intended to be a CONSTRUCTIVE PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a)(3).**

Respectfully submitted,

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